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30 September 1966

BRIEFING NOTES  
FOR THE DCI

C O N T E N T S

CATEGORY A

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING

A. VIETNAM

- 1. Quang Tri Province - DMZ Build-up
- 2. Buddhist Leadership Remains in Disarray
- 3. National Front for Liberation of South Vietnam

B. COMMUNIST CHINA

- ✓ 1. Domestic Developments--Red Guard and Leadership
- ✓ 2. Communist China's Advanced Weapons Programs

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C. USSR

- 2. Advanced Weapons Systems
- 3. The Soviet ICBM Force

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D. OPTIONAL ITEMS

- ✓ 1. Syria

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CATEGORY B

Being prepared by Legislative Counsel's office

Mr. John Warner

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BRIEFING NOTES FOR DCI

THAILAND

I. The Communists in Thailand are determined to step up the pace of their subversion, although it is clear that their capabilities are still limited.

A. The Communist insurgents have been increasing propaganda activities in the northeast,

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1. They have not, however, been able to follow up a series of well planned and executed attacks which they made in the northeast in June.
2. Although the rainy season is partially responsible, it is clear that the insurgents are still on the defensive and have the capability of mounting only occasional attacks.

B. We are beginning to develop a better understanding of the Thai insurgent movement, particularly its weaknesses,

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1.

[redacted] the Communists seem to be laboring under some severe handicaps. One of the most important is that they have not been notably successful in winning significant support among the villagers, although they have tried to capitalize on latent economic discontent and local grievances. As a consequence, they have been forced to rely heavily on strong-arm methods which in turn further exacerbate relations with villagers.

2. A dearth of dedicated cadres has limited the movement's ability to go into new areas and to expand activities in areas already under loose Communist control.

3. North Vietnam may be supplying cadres to help out with such things as weapons training, but thus far there is no firm evidence on this.

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II. Meanwhile, the military leadership in Bangkok is moving ahead with its counterinsurgency effort, after a slow and somewhat misdirected start.

A. Several organizational changes have been made over the past year to get the counterinsurgency operation on a professional footing.

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1. The majority of these changes have been  
aimed at getting better coordination be-  
tween conflicting police, military, and  
civilian authorities

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BRIEFING NOTE  
FOR DCI

LAOS

- I. A new crisis has arisen in Premier Souvanna's perennially troubled relations with his National Assembly.
  - A. This crisis was triggered by Souvanna's refusal in mid-summer to grant the assembly's request for additional appointments to the cabinet.
  - B. On September 16 the assembly rejected the government's proposed budget.
  - C. Souvanna wants to use the present impasse as an excuse for dissolving the assembly.
    1. The King has reluctantly given Souvanna approval to dismiss the assembly if necessary.
    2. The King's council is pressing for a compromise solution which would

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allow the assembly to sit until  
recess--October 11--and remain re-  
cessed until the spring elections.

2. Another proposal being considered  
would have a special assembly com-  
mittee session called to pass the  
budget.

D. Although Souvanna on September 27  
reaffirmed his intention to dissolve  
the assembly, a compromise solution is  
likely.

II. Souvanna's firm stand against the assembly  
pressure has been backed by the army, which  
plays a major role in Laotian politics.

III. The military situation has remained basically  
stable since the beginning of the rainy sea-  
son in May.

A. Friendly guerrilla forces made some  
limited advances in northern Laos during  
the rainy season and regained a small  
number of hilltop positions lost earlier  
to the Communists.

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1. This see-sawing of positions has been a feature of the Laos scene for years--the Communists advancing during the dry season and then losing ground during the rains.
2. In large part, the poor Communist performance during the monsoon is due to the difficulty in resupply from North Vietnam over washed-out roads.
3. Because of the difficulty in resupply, large numbers of North Vietnamese troops which form the major portion of the effective Communist combat force in Laos, are annually withdrawn into North Vietnam during the rainy season.

B. There is no evidence that the Communists contemplate a substantially higher level of military action in the upcoming dry season (October-April) than in past years but [redacted]

[redacted] already beginning to come in about the return of North Vietnamese troops to northern Laos.

1. The numbers reported thus far, six to ten battalions, are in keeping with past levels of North Vietnamese troop strength in northern Laos.

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C.

[redacted]  
[redacted] a few Chinese Communist troops have  
been entering north Laos.

1. The Chinese Communists have for years been supplying certain Laotian Communist and leftist neutralist forces in northern Laos with ammunition, arms and other supplies.
2. It is likely that the Chinese reported recently in Laos are transporting such supplies.
3. There is no evidence that Chinese Communist troops are being stationed in Laos or that they will be used in a combat role in that country.

2. A recently captured Communist document in South Vietnam revealed that the party central

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committee early this year made support of  
Laotian operations with supplies and with men  
one of the major tasks of North Vietnam's  
chief military headquarters in southern  
North Vietnam.

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3.

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[redacted]  
[redacted] road clearing operations  
by North Vietnamese work gangs and bulldozers in mid-September.

4. These teams in mid-September also reported the first substantial movement of trucks-- 76 over a ten-day period--through Mu Gia southward since the rains began in May.

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BRIEFING NOTES  
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C O N T E N T S

IV

CATEGORY ~~A~~: CURRENT INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING

A. Vietnam

1. Quang Tri Province - DMZ Build-up
2. Buddhist Leadership Remains in Disarray
3. National Front for Liberation of South Vietnam

B. Communist China

1. Domestic Developments - Red Guard and Leadership
3. Communist China's Advanced Weapons Programs

C. USSR

2. Advanced Weapons Systems
3. The Soviet ICBM Force

D. Optional Items

1. Syria

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BRIEFING NOTES  
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SOUTH VIETNAM

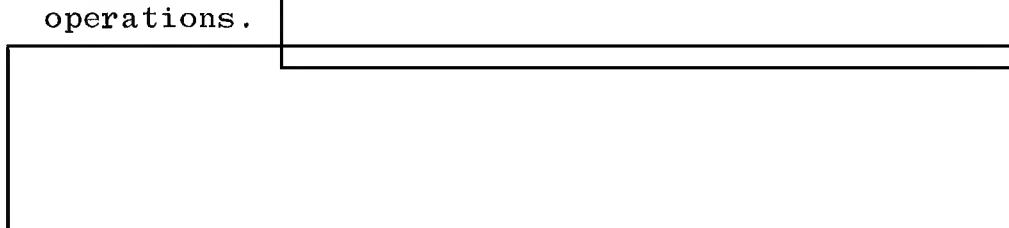
[MMP, QUANG TRI, DMZ and Operation PRAIRIE]

QUANG TRI PROVINCE - DMZ BUILD-UP

I. There have been a number of indications in the last month that North Vietnamese forces have been engaged in an intensive logistics and troop build-up for offensive operations in the northernmost part of South Vietnam--Quang Tri Province.

A. This build-up has apparently been somewhat slowed down and disrupted by US air and ground operations.

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For example, the US Marine operation--code-named PRAIRIE--which has been under way in Quang Tri Province since early August has reported killing ~~over 700~~ <sup>more than 950</sup> enemy troops. US air operations in this area have also slowed down the logistic effort by causing numerous secondary explosions and fires.

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B. Nevertheless, the enemy buildup is continuing despite the relative success of US efforts at spoiling any Communist plans for an offensive.

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II. Enemy forces in the Quang Tri Province - Demilitarized Zone area include the estimated 9,000- man 324th North Vietnamese Army division and several other recently infiltrated, as yet unidentified regiments.

A. In addition, there are other forces on the North Vietnamese side of the border which could be committed to an offensive. These

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include the 341st Division

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B. Moreover, there apparently is an extensive logistics force supporting these troops in the DMZ area.

C. The build-up is following classic Communist patterns also

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II. In assessing the Communist build-up in northern South Vietnam, it is unlikely that they intend to launch a large offensive before the rainy season sets in around the end of October. Until that time, US air and firepower superiority should be able to successfully stave off any large scale push.

A. It is important to remember, however, that the Communists have gone for a considerable period of time without any sort of a significant military victory.

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the Communists are preparing

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for just such a needed victory in the I Corps area--preferably to come before the US elections in early November.

1. Moreover, past Communist practice has shown that they are not adverse to throwing large numbers of troops into a battle if they believe they can achieve a significant objective. In the present circumstances, the buildup that has already taken place--clearly the most significant current event in the war--gives rise to the possibility that they may "go for broke" in northern South Vietnam to gain that elusive victory so necessary to their morale.

B. In any case, it is estimated that Communist forces in Quang Tri Province still retain the capability to launch a multi-regimental offensive in the coming weeks. Such a push could be aimed at the series of towns along Route 9 in central Quang Tri Province.

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SOUTH VIETNAM

BRIEFING NOTES FOR THE DCI

Buddhist Leadership Remains in Disarray

I. Despite South Vietnam's progress toward a representative government, the continued split among the leaders of the Buddhist Institute is obscuring that organization's future role in the political process.

A. Although their boycott of the recent constituent assembly election was largely ineffectual, the militant Buddhists are remaining firm in their opposition to the present government and its policies, including the constitution drafting process which is just getting under way.

1. Thich Tri Quang, the leader of the more radical and active Buddhists, ended his three-month hunger fast shortly after the election, but at the same time, announced his continued opposition to the government.

2. Quang's opposition stems specifically from the government's quelling of the "struggle" movement which he inspired in central Vietnam last spring, and from his general aspiration for a dominant political voice in the country's affairs.

3. Although Quang has lost much of the real political power he previously enjoyed and is now no real threat to the government, he and his activist followers still have the potential for future political strength.

B. Thich Tam Chau, a moderate Buddhist leader and still formally head of the Buddhist Institute, recently began efforts to override the attitude of the militants by rallying the more moderate Buddhists, and then arriving at a settlement with the government.

1. Chau is receiving the cooperation of government leaders, who are willing to make some concessions to the Buddhists under his leadership. In fact, many

if not all of the Buddhist "struggle" prisoners arrested during the spring and early summer may soon be released by the GVN to boost Chau's prestige.

2. However, Chau is having no success in dealing with most of the other members of the Buddhist Institute, some of whom may question Chau's loyalties.

C. An extraordinary congress of the entire Unified Buddhist Association--for which the Institute acts as an executive arm-- is scheduled to be held in October, in an effort to settle on a Buddhist policy toward the government and to sort out the leadership problems.

1. At present, Chau is working hard to line up support for his position, but it remains questionable whether he would be able to prevail over Tri Quang and his followers at such a congress.

D. Should the congress not be called or should it fail to settle the Buddhists' leadership and policy problems, a formal organizational split would seem to be quite possible.

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BRIEFING NOTES FOR THE DCI

SOUTH VIETNAM

NATIONAL FRONT LIBERATION SOUTH VIETNAM

I. Hanoi's public denials of control and participation in the fighting in South Vietnam have been undercut by captured documents and prisoners which have revealed that the top NFLSV leaders are well known North Vietnamese central committee members.

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A.

[redacted] provided confirmation that the man who runs the entire Communist war effort in South Vietnam is North Vietnamese Politburo member Nguyen Chi Thanh (NNGWEEN CHEE TAN).

1. Thanh is the second ranking officer in the entire North Vietnamese military establishment, ranking next to Minister of Defense Vo Nguyen Giap. Thanh left North Vietnam to take over operations in the South early in 1965.
2. His two principal deputies are also both generals in the North Vietnamese Army

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and members of the Central Committee of  
the North Vietnamese Communist Party.

3. One of them, the military deputy, is Tran Van Tra, who used to be deputy chief of staff of the North Vietnamese Army. Now, under the alias of Tran Nam Trung, he heads the military component of the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam.
4. Nguyen Chi Thanh's deputy for political affairs is another North Vietnamese general and central committee man, Tran Do.
5. Active Communist field commanders in South Vietnam are also beginning to be identified as North Vietnamese generals. In the important area just south of the DMZ, Military Region V, the military commander is reported to be North Vietnamese General Nguyen Don.

B. Documents captured by US Marine forces in this area have revealed high level North Vietnamese Party Central Committee Directives defining the responsibility of the southernmost

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North Vietnamese military headquarters, Military Region IV, for operations in the South Vietnam province of Quang Tri.

1. North Vietnamese armed forces garrisoned in the area just north of the DMZ were also assigned the responsibility of supplying not only South Vietnam with "man-power and resources," but also Laos.
2. These army units were designated as the "mobile forces" for all three "theatres of war"--North Vietnam, South Vietnam, and Laos.

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B. COMMUNIST CHINA

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BRIEFING NOTES  
FOR DCI

COMMUNIST CHINA

Domestic Developments--Red Guards and Leadership

I. The internal political scene in Communist China has been marked by turmoil and disarray for many months now. All of the indications are that the situation is still unstable, and there may be further upheavals.

A. For the past six weeks, mobs of rampaging teen-agers of the so-called Red Guard have kept the country in a state of disorder.

1. They have been roaming the streets of all major Chinese cities, harassing suspected enemies of the regime and occasionally beating them up.

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3. There have been a few reports of violence and bloodshed, but for the most part the Red Guards appear to be a disciplined and well controlled organization.
4. In the past week or so, their harassment has turned from the populace to high officials within the regular party machinery who oppose the current leadership. The Red Guards have conducted violent demonstrations against many city and provincial party headquarters, and have displayed wall posters attacking many high officials by name.

B. These destructive antics have tended to divert public attention from far more important developments within the Peking leadership. It appears to us that the top structure of the regime is undergoing a massive shake-up, and that the Red Guards are being used by the current leadership to consolidate its power.

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(BRIEFING BOARD, CHICOM LEADERSHIP)

II. Massive demonstrations in Peking on August 18 and 31, and on September 15 featured what appears to be a new line-up of the party's top policy-making body, the politburo.

A. Mao Tse-tung still dominates the leadership, but Defense Minister Lin Piao has taken the place of Mao's long-time deputy, Liu Shao-chi.

1. Liu has been the titular chief of state. There has been no announcement that he has lost that position, and he is still a member of the politburo, but he has been dropped ignominiously from second to eighth place.

B. As for Mao himself, we are not sure just how much control he still exercises over day-to-day events, or how long he will last. He is 72 years old, has a long history of cardio-vascular trouble, and was probably seriously ill last winter.

III. Mao's new deputy, Lin Piao, is not in much better health.

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A. Lin is one of the youngest men in the  
politburo at 59, but he has been ill for  
much of the past 30 years, [redacted]

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IV. Mao, however, appears to have chosen Lin to  
be his successor in spite of Lin's frailty.  
We think this must reflect Mao's growing  
mistrust of other elements of the leadership.

A. Perhaps the most significant aspect of  
the recent changes has been the break-up  
of the group of leaders which had been  
running the party machinery for the past  
decade.

1. Liu Shao-chi was the leading member  
of that group.

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2. The general secretary of the party, Teng Hsiao-ping, is another leading member of that group. He has been weakened, but not as much as Liu.
3. A couple of months ago, in fact, Teng appeared to have gained in the shake-up. All that has changed. Teng is still in the inner circle of Mao's advisers, but he has slipped from third or fourth place to sixth place in the power structure.

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- B. In place of the party leaders, military leaders close to Lin, and government figures like Chou En-lai, have risen in importance.
- V. For many years now, it had appeared to us that the leaders of the party machinery--men like Liu Shao-chi--enjoyed Mao's full trust.

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- A. They not only had a long record of personal loyalty to Mao; their radical approach was also in accord with his.
- B. This situation presents us with a puzzling contradiction, especially in regard to its policy implications:
  1. Mao is apparently intent on pushing through a radical program to reshape Chinese society. It appears to be so radical that the party rank and file could not be trusted to carry it out.  
The Red Guard had to be created.
  2. There is, therefore, no satisfactory explanation for Mao's willingness to turn against his old comrades who appeared to share his radical views.
  3. The government administrators and economic specialists who have been retained or even promoted--men like Chou En-lai, Chen Yun, and Li Fu-chun--are the relatively moderate members of the politburo.

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4. Yet these moderates are now the men who presumably will be helping Mao and Lin Piao to implement the radical program.

VI. As I have said, the situation appears to be highly unstable. The events of the past ten months must have intensified the antagonisms and mistrust among those leaders who have survived the purge.

- A. The possibility has increased that when Mao finally does go, the succession will be disorderly, and marked by factional struggles and bloody purges.
- B. It is also far from clear whether or not the new leaders are going to institute any major changes in domestic or foreign policy.
- C. There has, however, been no change in the basic hard-line nature of the men at the top. As a result, we foresee no abrupt change in Peking's policy of implacable hostility toward the United States.

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BRIEFING NOTES FOR DCI

COMMUNIST CHINA

Communist China's Advanced Weapons Programs

I. Communist China is putting a high proportion of its scarce technical and industrial resources into a major effort to develop an advanced weapons program. At present, the Chinese could deliver a few low-yield nuclear weapons with their small medium bomber force. They haven't achieved a missile strike capability yet, but are working on an MRBM and probably also an ICBM.

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tack capability for about six years, but we  
don't think they are yet ready to deploy a mis-  
sile system. [redacted]

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[redacted] it looks like an MRBM

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[redacted]

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with a range of 700 to 1,000 miles. This would let them hit almost all the important targets in the Far East--including many US bases--as well as some important targets in the USSR. We now estimate that they could begin deploying a few MRBMs in 1967 or 1968. By then they could have a low-yield nuclear warhead for the missile.

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IV.

the Chinese are working on a much bigger rocket, one capable of ICBM ranges or space launches.

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We don't expect the first test flight

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until late 1967 or early 1968.

B. If they start test-firing an ICBM by early 1968, they could have one operational by 1971 to 1973. It would take a couple of more years to deploy a significant number, even if they do not elect to use hardened launch positions.

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c. An ICBM would be attractive to the Chinese to threaten the US or the USSR. Most of their other potential targets could be reached with the MRBM.

v. The Chinese have also built one missile-carrying submarine, a copy of the Soviet G-class. The Soviet version carries three ballistic missiles with a range of 350 miles. The Chinese submarine is now operating, but we don't have any evidence that they have developed a missile

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The G-class is diesel-powered, must surface to launch its missiles, and has a very limited capability to threaten the US because of the short time it could remain off the West Coast.

VI. The Chinese are also preparing to produce jet medium bombers, copies of the Soviet TU-16. The first one won't roll out until 1968, and it will take several years to deploy more than a few of these aircraft. China's present bomber force is limited to two TU-16s, a dozen aging B-29 type aircraft, and about 270 IL-28 jet light bombers. They could now have a few nuclear weapons stockpiled for delivery by the medium bombers.

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c. USSR

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BRIEFING NOTES FOR THE DCI

Advanced Defensive Systems

I. The continuing Soviet emphasis on defense is seen in their vigorous program during the past decade to develop an anti-ballistic-missile system.

A. Along with the ABM development, they have produced new air defense systems to counter advanced aerodynamic vehicles.

Both types of systems are now being deployed.

B. The Soviets have been working on an anti-ballistic missile defense for Moscow for several years. The system could achieve initial operational capability within the next year or two and full operation within

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BRIEFING NOTES FOR THE DCI

THE SOVIET ICBM FORCE

(Chart on ICBM Force)

I. The strength of the Soviet ICBM force began moving upward from its 1965 level of 224 operational launchers.

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A.

we

believe that the ICBM force has 329

operational launchers-

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B. By mid-1968, it is expected that the

Soviets will have a force of 664 to 764 operational ICBM launchers.

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II. The Soviet ICBM force is not only increasing rapidly in numbers, but it is also changing quickly from primarily soft and concentrated launch sites into largely hardened and dispersed silos.

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III. The SS-11 is a small missile roughly comparable  
in size to the US Minuteman I. Its relatively  
low accuracy and small warhead [redacted]  
make it useful mainly for attacking large,  
soft targets such as cities.

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A. The SS-9 is a large missile [redacted]

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[redacted] Its  
relatively greater accuracy and large  
payload make it more suitable for  
attacking hardened targets.

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D. OPTIONAL ITEMS

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BRIEFING NOTES FOR THE DCI

SYRIA

I. The radical Baathist military junta which seized control of the Syrian Government last February is still clinging to power.

A. The regime's radically leftist complexion and violent anti-Western propaganda stance are favorable to the interests of both the Soviet Union and the domestic Syrian Communists. Nevertheless, the Communist Party of Syria has not achieved the freedom of action that it apparently expected when the new regime came to power.

B. The USSR has given the Syrians extensive propaganda support. A major agreement was signed in April to finance Syria's long-standing Euphrates Dam development project. The Soviets will exercise some caution, however, in becoming too deeply committed to support of the uncertain regime.

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II. Serious personal, ideological, and religious rivalries divide the present government.

A. The military leaders who dominate the scene at the moment are members of the minority Alawite sect. They have successfully purged large numbers of Sunni Muslims, the majority of the Syrian population, from influential positions within the military establishment.

B. The Druze, another minority group, also played a disproportionate role within the army until the unsuccessful coup attempt in early September by Druze officers. Many of these officers have now fled to Jordan.

C. Another source of contention is whether or not the Syrians will seek a renewal of close relations with Nasir's Egypt.

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[MAP, ISRAELI-SYRIAN BORDER]

III. Meanwhile, tension along the Israeli-Syrian border remains high. The belligerent postures adopted by both countries make future incidents, including retaliatory raids by Israel, almost a certainty.

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- A. Following a serious border clash on 15 August, Syria stated that it would answer Israeli retaliation by striking directly into Israel rather than complaining to the UN.
- B. The Syrians resumed work on their Jordan River diversion projects in August, and have cleared some 45 kilometers of the 75-kilometer diversion canal. The Israelis, however, are said to be relaxed about the present work, which is being carried out well inside Syrian territory.

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